

In the Drawings

There are no amendments to the Drawings.

Remarks

Applicant has amended claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 13, and 14 and cancelled claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter was added by the amendment, as all of the amended matter was either previously illustrated or described in the drawings, written specification and/or claims of the present application. The amendment to claim 1 finds support in at least original claim 8 and Figure 1. Entry of the amendment and favorable consideration thereof is earnestly requested.

The Examiner has rejected claims 3, 6, 13, 14, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner has further rejected Claims 1 – 5, 8, 10 – 12 and 16 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,431,155 to Marelli ("the '155 patent"). The Examiner has also rejected Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by EP 0 534 088 to Marelli ("the '088 publication"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 3, 6, 13, 14, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Application has amended claims 3, 6, 13 and 14 accordingly and believes that each of the pending claims now comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Furthermore, because claims 13, 14, and 15 were not rejected on any other grounds by the Examiner, Applicant believes that at least claims 13, 14, and 15 as amended are in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 – 5, 8, 10 – 12 and 16 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by the '155 patent. These rejections are respectfully traversed. "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found,

either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Claim 1, as amended, requires among other limitations a core comprising "at its second end, an end portion of reduced diameter around which an annular space is defined in the channel, the reduced diameter being constant along at least a portion of the end portion." Claim 1 further requires that the "second end" of the core be "situated in the vicinity of the second end of the channel," which "is capable of communicating with a reservoir." The '155 patent fails to teach or suggest at least these limitations.

The Examiner cites Figure 1 of the '155 patent as teaching "an end portion of a reduced diameter." The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Figure 1 at best shows a stem 7 having a rounded base. What's more, Figure 1 certainly does not show a "core" comprising "at its second end, an end portion of reduced diameter around which an annular space is defined in the channel, the reduced diameter being constant along at least a portion of the end portion" as required by claim 1.

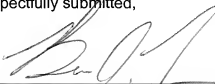
The Examiner also rejected Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by the '088 publication. However, the '088 publication also fails to teach at least the above limitation of claim 1 as amended. Nowhere in the '088 publication is a core found comprising "at its second end, an end portion of reduced diameter around which an annular space is defined in the channel, the reduced diameter being constant along at least a portion of the end portion." Therefore, because neither the '155 patent nor the '088 publication, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element as set forth in claim 1, claim 1 cannot be anticipated or obvious in view the cited references.

It is well settled that "claims in dependent form shall be construed to include all the limitations of the claim incorporated by reference into the dependent claim." 37 CFR 1.75(c). Therefore, claims 2 – 12 and 16 – 20 depend from claim 1 as amended likewise cannot be anticipated or obvious in view of the cited prior art.

Claim 9 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and has therefore been amended to include each and every element of the claims from which it depended. Claim 13 – 15 were also not rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and therefore claim 13 has likewise been rewritten in independent form. As likely recognized by the Examiner, Claims 9 and 13 – 15 include several elements not taught or suggested by the cited prior art including, by way of example, an “end portion compris[ing] protruding axial fins” or a second end of a core that “is in axially bearing contact with an inner periphery of the rod and wherein at least one flow groove is formed between said second end and said inner periphery.” As such, Applicant submits that Claims 9 and 13 – 15 as amended are in condition for allowance.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 – 7 and 9 – 20, all of the claims remaining in the application, are in order for allowance and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



January 30, 2007

Gene S. Winter, Registration No. 28,352
Todd M. Oberdick, Registration No. 44,268
Benjamin J. Lehberger, Registration No. 56,217
Attorneys for Applicants
ST. ONGE STEWARD JOHNSTON & REENS LLC
986 Bedford Street
Stamford, CT 06905-5619
203 324-6155